

FINAL

FHR 8-100-11-78

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Temple Israel

and or common Unitarian Universalist Church

2. Location

street & number 17 South Seventh Street

not for publication

city, town Lafayette

vicinity of

congressional district Second

state Indiana

code 018

county

Tippecanoe

code 157

3. Classification

Category

☐ district  
☒ building(s)  
☐ structure  
☐ site  
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public  
☒ private  
☐ both

Public Acquisition

☐ in process  
☐ being considered

Status

☒ occupied  
☐ unoccupied  
☒ work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted  
☐ yes: unrestricted  
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture  
☐ commercial  
☐ educational  
☐ entertainment  
☐ government  
☐ industrial  
☐ military

☐ museum  
☐ park  
☐ private residence  
☒ religious  
☐ scientific  
☐ transportation  
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Greater Lafayette

street & number 17 South Seventh Street

city, town Lafayette

vicinity of

state Indiana 47905

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Tippecanoe County Courthouse

street & number Recorder's Office

city, town Lafayette

state Indiana 47901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date

federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local ☐

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☐ good  
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Temple Israel is a two story, painted brick structure of Romanesque design, built in 1867 by Jacob Welschbillig. The plan of the building is rectangular in shape. The west facade is the main facade which faces Seventh Street and contains the entrance vestibule. The synagogue is covered by a gabled roof, the ends of which face east and west.

The main entrance to the synagogue is through a projecting vestibule which was added to the main structure in 1898. The one story rectangular vestibule has a gabled roof and rests on a low, limestone foundation. The stepped gable forms a parapet, each step of which has a stone coping. Under the rake of the stepped gable is a corbel table. The stepped parapet with corbel table appears to be superimposed onto the front of the vestibule, forming pilasters at the corners. An arched doorway in the center of the vestibule's front facade consists of double doors, above which is a tympanum filled with leaded glass. The glass tympanum is divided by mullions, a straight mullion in the center with an arched mullion springing from each side. Over the entire doorway is a limestone arch with corbelled stops and a central keystone. On each side of the doorway are two wall-mounted lights enclosed with screen. Under the south light is a sign identifying the building as the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

The north and south sides of the vestibule each have an arched window, with limestone sill and arch with corbelled stops. The gabled roof of the vestibule has no overhang on the north and south edges. There is a stepped cornice under the north and south edges of the roof.

The two story facade behind the vestibule is divided into three bays, created by four pilasters. The first story features a small arched window on each side of the vestibule. The leaded windows have limestone sills and limestone arches with corbelled stops. The second story has longer windows than on the first story, flanking a larger central arched window. The second story windows are doublehung and are made of stained glass. As on the first floor, these windows have limestone sills and arches with corbelled stops. The central stained glass window of the second story is divided into three round arches, each arch consisting of a doublehung sash. The entire window has a limestone sill and an arch, with corbelled stops and a keystone in the center. Above the center window is a recessed limestone medallion engraved with the Star of David. The gabled roof is defined by a corbel table at the rake, which is complemented by the corbel table of the vestibule. Above the corbel table is a smooth fascia with a keystone placed at the apex. The four pilasters which divide the facade are interrupted by stone moldings placed near the raking trim. The pilasters culminate in chimney-like forms which extend above the roofline, giving the facade a massive quality.

The north and south facades have four windows on the first and second stories. The first story windows are shorter than those above. The windows on the second floor are of stained glass with flat, brick arches.

The addition of the vestibule is the only major exterior alteration to the synagogue. As a result of the vestibule, the interior was changed to create a larger seating capacity by putting a scissor stairway to the second floor sanctuary on either side of the entry. Other alterations include a new altar and a new heating system.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1866–67 **Builder/Architect** Jacob Welschbillig

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Temple Israel is significant because it is the oldest known building in Indiana originally built for use by a Jewish congregation. The Temple Israel was built by Jacob Welschbillig in 1867 for the Ahavas Achim Congregation. The Ahavas Achim Congregation, formed on April 27, 1849, was the second Jewish congregation in Indiana. (The congregation in Fort Wayne is the earliest, dating from 1848.)

The original handwritten contracts for the construction of the building are still in existence. They indicate that the plans and specifications were given to Welschbillig by the trustees of the congregation with some modifications agreed to during the year as construction proceeded.

Welschbillig constructed the building from local materials, although the stained glass windows are believed to have been imported. The Romanesque style of architecture is unique in this type of building, and it is the only building of its type in the Lafayette area.

The name was changed to Temple Israel in 1919. In 1969 the building was sold to the American National Red Cross. It was purchased in 1976 by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Greater Lafayette.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

"Temple Israel: One Hundred Years, 1849-1949," Centennial volume by  
Temple Israel, Lafayette, Indiana, 1949.  
Joseph Levine, Jewish Historical Society, Fort Wayne, Indiana

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Lafayette West, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	6	5	0	9	5	1	0	4	4	7	3	7	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John A. Carlson, Chairman

organization Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship  
of Greater Lafayette

date February 28, 1977

street & number 132 Pawnee Drive

telephone 463-7183

city or town West Lafayette,

state Indiana 47906

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date November 12, 1981

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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**Continuation sheet** Temple Israel

**Item number** 10 **Verbal Boundary** **Page** 1

Part of two and one-half ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ ) acres of land, being part of ten (10) acres donated by Reuben Kelsey to Tippecanoe County, Indiana, out of the east half of the northeast quarter of Section Twenty-nine (29) in Township Twenty-three (23) north, range four (4) west, the said two and one-half ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ ) acres being bounded as follows:

Beginning at a stake distant from the Northwest corner of the aforesaid ten (10) acres directly south thirteen (13) poles and eight (8) links running thence south thirteen (13) poles and eight (8) links; thence east thirty (30) poles; thence north thirteen (13) poles and eight (8) links; thence west thirty (30) poles to beginning.

The part of said two and one-half ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ ) acre tract hereby abstracted and nominated to the National Register is described as follows:

Beginning at the stake referred to as the commencing point of the said two and one-half ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ ) acre tract running thence south fifty (50) feet; thence east one hundred (100) feet; thence north fifty (50) feet; thence west one hundred (100) feet to the place of beginning.